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ASIAN CENTER
198 BROADWAY ROOM 302
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10038

July 25, 1980

Dear Sir or Madam,

As Americans and human rights activists, we are appalled by our government's continuing support for Indonesia's genocidal policies in East Timor. We have worked to bring the slaughter and famine in East Timor to the attention of the American people and recently the level of interest and support has escalated to an unprecedented level. We think that it is important for you to know of our people's concern and solidarity with the East Timorese people. Thus, we would like to share our information with you.

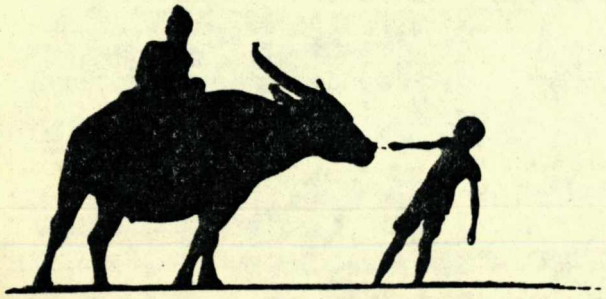
Our parent organization, Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC), is an inter-faith organization with a fifteen year history of effective peace and justice work. It has some 40 chapters, 4,500 members and an additional 12,000 supporters from all over the United States.

This spring, the CALC Human Rights Task Force made East Timor work a priority within the organization. A whole issue of our publication, CALC Report, was devoted to the genocide in East Timor. Demand for it has been particularly heavy and with requests for additional copies coming in from all over the United States and from far-away countries like Denmark and Hong Kong, it is now out of print. However, we have been working with the Southeast Asia Resource Center in the production of their East Timor issue of the Southeast Asia Chronicle. When the East Timor issue of the Chronicle is ready in August, it will replace the East Timor issue of CALC Report in getting the word out about the genocide in East Timor.

With the co-operation of organizations like the American Friends Service Committee and Amnesty International, our staff has been criss-crossing the country on speaking tours about East Timor. We made an average of one coast to coast trip a month in March, April and May. The three week tour in May was particularly successful. Our staff visited 15 cities in 7 states during which 19 public meetings held and 6 press interviews, 12 radio interviews and 2 television appearances were arranged. Through financial support from the religious community, we will be able to continue organizing tours like these in the fall.

Currently we are gathering materials for a mobile exhibition on the people of East Timor and their culture. The exhibit, which will accompany our staff on the fall tours, will bring home to the American people the people and culture of East Timor that their government is helping the Indonesian military to destroy. We are also planning a major conference on East Timor on October 20, 1980. More details about the conference will be available later.

The same level of concern exists in Washington, D.C. Three Congressional Hearings with a major focus on Indonesia and East Timor have been held in the past few months. In addition, there was an "Indonesia and East Timor" panel at a conference



on "U.S. Policy in East Asia" organized by the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy on May 1-2, 1980 in Washington, D.C.

On December 4, 1979, the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs held a hearing on "Famine Relief for East Timor." Together with the Subcommittee on International Organizations, it held another hearing on February 6, 1980. At this hearing, internationally renowned Southeast Asian specialist, Professor Ben Anderson of Cornell University testified on "Human Rights in Indonesia and East Timor." Prof. Anderson regretted that "on balance (human rights in Indonesia) are as seriously violated today as they were four years ago, and that recent releases of long-term political prisoners have been more than offset by a whole range of new violations." He suggested that the "U.S. should use its great influence in Indonesia in congruence with world opinion, and begin to pressure the Suharto government towards a complete withdrawal from East Timor." The hearing on June 10, 1980 by the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations is particularly significant. David Hinckley, Chairman of Amnesty International, U.S.A. reported on Amnesty International's research on the violations of human rights in Indonesia, particularly of "disappearances" of surrendered or captured Fretilin troops and of indiscriminate imprisonment and torture of East Timorese civilians. Father Francisco Fernandes, the Chairman of the East Timorese Refugees Commission in Portugal, described the Indonesian oppression in East Timor as recounted in letters smuggled out of the country. Admiral La Rocque (Ret.), now Director of the Center for Defense Information, examined the nature and timing of U.S. military aid to Indonesia and concluded that while the "U.S. government has provided valuable assistance to the Indonesia military actions," "the political, economic and military objectives of the U.S. are not served by the continued U.S. security assistance to the government of Indonesia while Indonesian troops occupy East Timor." Copies of the above testimonies are available upon request to the Asian Center.

Several Senators and Congressmen have taken a strong interest in the East Timor issue. Even Republican Presidential nominee Ronald Reagan is more aware of the East Timor issue after the Syracuse Herald Journal described him as "stumbling" when asked about East Timor in Syracuse on March 25, 1980. Senator Edward Kennedy made a statement on "Tragedy in East Timor" which was introduced into the Senate Congressional Record on November 15, 1979. Congressman Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) testified at the December 4 hearings. In addition, he sponsored a House of Representatives Resolution with 55 of his colleagues which among other things called on the President of the United States to "increase humanitarian assistance to East Timor" and "to encourage the Government of Indonesia to withdraw its troops from East Timor and to allow an internationally supervised election in which the East Timorese can freely exercise their right to self-determination." This House Resolution was introduced into the Congressional Record on April 16, 1980. In addition, Congressman Harkin is leading efforts to reunite the families of East Timorese refugees in East Timor with the refugees now resident in Portugal and Australia. Congressman Tony Hall (D-Ohio) sponsored Section 406 of the International Security and Development Co-operation Act which called for increased access to East Timor by international relief organizations and international journalists and free emigration. Congressman Hall also commented on the situation in East Timor during his presentation at the "U.S. Policy in East Asia" Conference.

Thus, unlike what the U.S. and Indonesian Governments would like us to believe, East Timor is not a dead issue or one which can be resolved by increased humanitarian aid. A very recent Far Eastern Economic Review report supports an earlier Manchester Guardian report that resistance to the Indonesian occupation is still very much alive in East Timor. The heroic struggle of the East Timorese people to determine their own

future for these five years has won the heart-felt admiration of many of us in the human rights activist community. We are resolved to work even harder to educate our fellow Americans so that they will take all steps necessary to support the people of East Timor.

We hope you will carefully study the enclosed materials. The plight of the East Timorese people requires the support of us all. Thank you.

Respectfully yours,

Don Luce

Don Luce,
for the Asian Center.